The University of Chicago

NON-DRAMATIC SOURCES FOR THE ROGUES IN MIDDLETON'S PLAYS

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1932

By
MILDRED GAYLER CHRISTIAN

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As to the author, the first quarto title-pages of the dramas bear information as follows: "W. S." wrote *The Puritan;* "T. Middleton," *Your Five Gallants;* and "T. M.," *A Mad World, My Masters.* This "T. M." was first identified with Middleton by the old cataloguers, Kirkman and Archer. E. H. C. Oliphant has ably discussed[6] the value of such attributions, looking upon Kirkman's opinion as that which "counts for most," and regarding his decision in this case as "Probably correct."[7]

The "W. S." of *The Puritan* has, however, led to some conjecture. It appears obvious that the publisher sought to sell this play by implying that Shakespeare wrote it,—a fact which has necessitated its discussion by C. F. Tucker Brooke in *The Shakespeare Apocrypha.* Bullen was the first to attribute the play to Middleton, and Brooke has advanced his opinion against the theory only because "the second scene of Act I, with its college cant and reminiscence, is the work of an Oxford man,"—a "certainty first pointed out by Dr. Farmer."[8] This fact no longer affords an insuperable difficulty, for Mark Eccles has proved[9] that Middleton was an Oxonian. There remains no other argument in the way of accepting *The Puritan* as Middleton's. The attribution is one to which E. K. Chambers,[10] W. D. Dunkel,[11] and Eccles conspicuously among modern scholars have given support. The material in this paper tends to support this belief.

The *Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele,* whose priority to *this drama,* as regards printing, has never been established, was published in the same year, 1607. The similarities in incident are as follows: the jests at the expense of the barber are used in III, v (slightly altered) and vi, of the play; the magic trick, in I, iv; the inn trick, in II, ii;[12] "A Jest of *George* going to *Oxford,*" in I, iv, and IV, ii, with slight changes.[13] The

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Puritan, 1607? (Bullen), 1606 (Schelling); *Your Five Gallants,* between 1606 and March 22, 1607–08 (Bullen), 1607 (Chambers); and *A Mad World, My Masters,* between 1606 and October 12, 1608 (Bullen), 1606 (Schelling), and 1604<>1606? (Chambers). The conjectures are voiced by A. H. Bullen in *The Works of Thomas Middleton* (London, 1885), Introduction; E. K. Chambers in *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), III, 438–442, *s.v.* the plays named; and F. E. Schelling in *Elizabethan Drama 1558–1642* (New York, 1908), *s.v.* the respective dramas.

[6] In "Problems of Authorship in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature," *MP,* VIII (1910–11), 417.

[7] *A Mad World, My Masters* has long been accepted as a part of the Middletonian canon, no one questioning the assignment.

[8] *Op. cit.,* p. xxxi.

[9] *Loc. cit.,* pp. 437–439.

[10] *Op. cit.,* III, 442.

[11] "The Authorship of *The Puritan,*" *PMLA,* XLV (September, 1930), 804–808.

[12] Pointed out by F. W. Chandler, *The Literature of Roguery* (New York, 1907), p. 64, n. 1. To some of these, attention had already been called by W. C. Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Jest-Books* (London, 1864), III, notes.

[13] Hazlitt, *loc. cit.*

jest-book was, like others, largely made up of other jest-books, but differed from most earlier collections of the sort in that the chief figure is not inane or clownish but is the gay conny-catcher, of gentleman class, of keen alertness, and full of appreciation of his own skill in avoiding creditors and gulling victims. The rogues depicted by the play are not merely George Pyeboord, who corresponds to George Peele, but include Peter Skirmish, an old soldier; Captain Idle, a highwayman; and Corporal Oath, a "Vaine-glorious fellow."[14] The Captain acts the Conjurer[15] in the play, never appearing in the rôle of highwayman. Skirmish and Oath are minor figures. George is the brains of the group, the true conny-catcher, making plans, playing jokes—always with an ulterior purpose—and shifting disguises. His escapades form over half of the play: I, ii and iv; II, i, iii; III, iii, iv, v; IV, ii, iii; V, i, iv—eleven out of eighteen scenes. But George Pyeboord is such a tame figure when weighed against the brilliant (by comparison), many-faceted character of the hero of the *Merrie Conceited Jests* that I cannot believe he could have suggested the "George Peele" of that work. Rather, it seems far more reasonable to suppose that the latter existed before the drama but proved too difficult of imitation in the hands of an inexpert playwright. For *The Puritan* is certainly the least *expert* of the plays attributed to Middleton and suggests that he was yet experimenting in the art of dramatic composition.[16] I believe, then, (1) that the *Jests* existed prior to the play; (2) for reasons to be set forth hereafter, that the published, rather than the MS. form of the *Jests* was the source for the author of *The Puritan;* and (3) that that author was very likely Middleton. Certainly it can be proved that Middleton knew the collection called the *Merrie Conceited Jests* and that he drew upon it for suggestion in *A Mad World, My Masters* and closely followed it in parts of *Your Five Gallants.*

In the collection under discussion occurs a jest where George's four friends pass themselves off as his servants, inventing an intricate scheme to steal various objects and escape—a plan very similar to, though by no means identical with, the schemes of Folliwit and his companions, Lieutenant Mawworm and Ancient Hoboy, in *A Mad World, My Masters.*

[14] The opening stage directions to I, iii.

[15] He here appears in place of George, who, in the source, acts the magician. See Number XI, "A Jest of George Riding to Oxford."

[16] In view of the facts that this work and *The Family of Love* both satirize Puritans (one can detect many of the ideas behind the satire of *The Family of Love* in embryo, as it were, in *The Puritan*), that both bear the date of 1607 (the latter in *SR*, "12 Octobris"), and that the latter's prologue says "opinion hath not blaz'd" the author's "fame," one is led to speculate upon the possibility that *The Puritan* just antedates *The Family of Love*, and was printed as by "W.S." because the real author was still, as he tells us, a nonentity.

The jest[17] follows:

[So that the four friends] should seeme as servants to *George Peele* and the better to colour it [it was decided] they should goe change their cloakes, the one like the other, so neere as they could possible: the which, at *Beelzebub's* brother, the Broker's, they might quickly doe: This was soone accomplished.[18]

They repaired to the Three Pigeons inn at Brentford, where they spent all the friends had between them—£5. George then sent a man for an additional piece of baggage, for "I intend not to goe home this two dayes." The man borrowed a horse on which to go, never intending to return. Then George said he expected friends from London and hence wished a good supper prepared.

Now you [the reader] must imagine there was not a peny owing in the house, for he had paid as liberall as *Caesar*, as far as *Caesar's* wealth went. For indeed most of the money was one Caesar's an honest man yet living in London.[19]

Meanwhile, one of the servants besought the hostess to beg his master for permission to go to see a sweetheart of his in Kingstone. She did and provided him with a horse for the trip. *He* escaped. George was now "accompanied with none but one *Anthony Nit*, a Barber, who Din'd and Sup't with him continually, of whom he had borrowed a Lute to passe away the melancholy afternoone." George asked the man to supper, the barber departing till then. Peele next complained how raw and cold it was and borrowed a cloak of the Hostess—"her Husbands holiday Gowne"; with it on, he walked "into the Meddowes" to "practise upon his Lute," never returning, of course. The other two servants escaped while Host and Hostess were busy. In London, "they all met, and sold the Horse and the Mare, the Gowne and the Lute."[20]

For a similar tale, consider the play. Its hero, Folliwit, stands midway between the rogue who yields to occasion and the professional, able to make the most of the passing moment, skilled as if by constant practice, employing disguise in a professional manner—like "George Peele." Folliwit lives in a perfect whirl of rascality. He is seeking to secure for present use some of the money he knows his grandfather has willed to him. Hence he disguises himself and his companions, himself as Lord

[17] Number 1 in the collection. Its title reads: "The Jest of George Peele with Four of His Companions at Brainford." [18] Cf. *A Mad World, My Masters*, I, i, 79–80 and II, i.

[19] Could this be a reference to Robert Keysar or Caesar, goldsmith and manager of the Children of the Revels, who, in Trinity Term 1609, brought suit against Thomas Middleton for a debt? See H. N. Hillebrand, "Thomas Middleton's 'The Viper's Brood'," *MLN* (January, 1927), pp. 36 ff.

[20] The thieving of the play is accomplished by an entirely different method (see II, iv and v; III, iii; and so on) but the tone is identical—one of impudent rascality.

Owemuch and his fellows as servants. They do not relish this makeup, but, for the sake of the spoils, give in. He is welcomed by Sir Bounteous Progress, his grandfather, who has heard a great deal of Lord Owemuch and who is so fearful of being thought stingy that he heaps courtesies upon them. After everyone has retired for the night, they disguise themselves as robbers, bind all the servants and then Sir Bounteous. They force him to give them all the contents of his cabinets. He begs that they shall not touch Lord Owemuch, but is informed that the lord has already been bound and rifled. He is horrified that a guest should receive such treatment in his house. The robbers, having bound him, resume their first disguise. One, as the footman, can bind all the others and himself remain unbound since

> The footman, of all others, will be supposed to 'scape, for he comes to no bed all night, but lies in's clothes, to be first ready i' the morning; the horse and he lies in litter together, that's the right fashion of your bonny footman: and his freedom will make the better for our purpose, for we must have one i' the morning to unbind the knight, that we may have our sport within ourselves.[21]

In the morning Sir Bounteous pays the servant of Lord Owemuch for what has been supposedly stolen from the guest.

In a later part of the play, Folliwit disguises as Frank Gullman, the lady-love of Sir Bounteous, and, while waiting in a room of the knight's house, steals jewels and escapes. His last escapade is to appear at the house of Sir Bounteous, this time disguised as one of the strolling players belonging to Lord Owemuch's company. Lieutenant Mawworm and Ancient Hoboy, his accomplices throughout, are likewise his assistants here. They ask to present *The Slip*, a play, before Sir Bounteous and his guests, and borrow for use as properties "a chain for a justice's hat," a jewel, and Sir Bounteous's watch. While Folliwit speaks the prologue, the rest of his fellows flee with the loot. They are arrested and brought back by the constable, but Folliwit so plays his part that the onlookers think the whole thing part of the play. Folliwit can truly be called a "cheerful knave."

The likenesses between the play and the *Jests* are: (1) the similarity between the heroes' characters is great; (2) the hero's assistants put on the disguise of servants;[22] and (3) a play is presented only to permit

[21] II, v, 76–83.

[22] Dekker's *Lanthorne and Candlelight*, Chap. VII, "Rank Riders," has a somewhat similar "blue coats" incident, but the work appears to have been written after *The Belman's* success in 1608; that necessarily was after March 14, 1608 (when *The Belman* was entered in the *SR*), rather late for Middleton unless *A Mad World, My Masters* was written after a reading of the MS. of *Lanthorne and Candlelight*. The *SR* entry of the play was on October 4, 1608; that of *Lanthorne and Candlelight* not until October 25, 1608. The postulation of relationship is hardly worth while.

thieveries. The last incident occurs in "The Jest of George Peele at Bristow," Number 6 of the collection, which tells of George's arranging for a play, collecting an audience, taking the gate receipts and then, in a borrowed silk robe, giving a prologue which, at his exit (and escape), keeps the audience until he has at least got some distance away. He and Folliwit resemble one another in their hearty enjoyment of the gulling they do. Neither fails to profit by his mischief, yet each proceeds on the slimmest margin in accomplishing his frauds. Brazenness carries them to success.

The *Merrie Conceited Jests* is the only work of the sixteenth or seventeenth century among all those which I have investigated which affords resemblance sufficient to suggest it as a source for Middleton in *A Mad World, My Masters*. The similarities are, however, more general than particular, so that conclusive proof is yet to seek that Middleton knew the jests of this collection. For such proof, one may turn to *Your Five Gallants*.

Almost none but rascals form the *dramatis personae* of this drama, yet Goldstone and Pursenet are by far the most adept of the company. Their dexterity is so great as to justify one in calling it finesse, especially in Goldstone. Both are assisted by "light-fingered" servants. Fulk acts as serving-man to Goldstone and, conniving with his master, manages to game with his betters-in-rank,[23] leaving them penniless by the end of the evening, for he has used false dice. His gain is about eighty angels, to be shared with his master. Goldstone by now is so triumphant that he says to Fulk, "We'll join powers anon, and see how strong we are in the whole number [of coins]. Mass, yon gilt goblet stands so full in mine eye . . . it comes like cheese after a great feast."[24] His inventive powers are instantly set in motion and he wards against the Vintner's presence by sending him for soft wax. Then he hides the goblet, while Fulk screens him a little. Next he proposes that the company disperse. But two Drawers with the Vintner discover that the goblet is gone. The tavern-keeper, tactful as he knows how to be, says:

> All's paid, and your worships are welcome, only there's a goblet missing, gentlemen, and cannot be found about house.
>
> *Gol.* How, a goblet? . . . Came there no stranger here?
>
> *Vin.* No, sir.
>
> *Gol.* 'Tis a marvellous matter, that a goblet should be gone, and none but we in the room; the loss is near all, here as we are; keep the door, vintner.[25]

Pursenet meanwhile becomes intensely concerned; aside to the Boy, he says:

[23] The scene occurs in II, iii.

[24] II, iii, 320–323.

[25] *Ibid.*, ll. 349–352, 357, 359–361.

'Slife, you have not stole the goblet, boy, have you?
Boy. Not I, sir.
Pur. I was afraid.—[Then aloud, boldly] . . . let each man search his fellow. . . .
Gol. Seek about floor.—What was the goblet worth, vintner?[26]

Goldstone proposes that each person present contribute an angel, else "it may grow to a gangrene in our credits, and be incurable." They agree gladly, whereupon he attempts to mollify the Vintner with assurances that the event "has dismayed the gentlemen much" and "not three times thrice the worth of the goblet shall hang between them and thee, both in their continual custom and all their acquaintances'."[27] The money is paid: all go out—Goldstone and Fulk last, snatching the goblet from its hiding-place.

Compare "How George Peele Served Half a Score Citizens," the tenth of the *Merrie Conceited Jests*. It has a situation in which a group of men at a tavern (?) are forced to share payment for a supper to which George had invited them. George had had a good meal at their expense and had escaped. The situation is not identical with Middleton's but is based upon the scheme of having a company pay for the trickery of one who alone profits, as Goldstone did when he stole the gilt goblet. There is, however, a yet more striking parallel between Middleton and the *Jests* in connection with this same incident. One seldom has the good fortune to catch Middleton so perfectly as here. In the "Jest of George Riding to Oxford," Number 11, a tale prominent in *The Puritan* also, one finds the hero seeking diligently for a rapier he had hidden from its owner.

"This is strange," quoth George, "it should be gone in this fashion, none being here but ourselves, and the fellows of the house"; who were examined, but no rapier could be heard of: all the company much grieved; but George, in a pitiful chafe, swore it should cost him forty shillings but he would know what was become of it, if art could do it.

The close likeness of this passage to Middleton's wording, quoted earlier, is too striking to be accidental. Compare the following details from the play: (1) Goldstone's "Came there no stranger here? . . . 'Tis a marvelous matter, that a goblet should be gone and none but we in the room"; (2) the gallants search one another in vain; (3) the event "has dismayed the gentlemen much," Goldstone assures the Vintner; (4) it is Goldstone, *the thief*, who is the most persistent in search for the lost article. Since Middleton undoubtedly used the *Jests* as source in this case, an since the eleventh jest was laid under particular contribution in this and *The Puritan*, there is, it may be noted in passing, still less reason to deny his authorship of the latter drama.

[26] *Ibid.*, ll. 369–373, 378–379.

[27] II, iii, 385–386, 391, 395–398.

In III, v of *Your Five Gallants*, Bungler catches the Boy trying to pick his pocket. Pursenet is horrified: "Where learnt you that manners? what company have you kept a' late, that you are so transformed into a rogue?"[28] He represents the boy as a degenerate in a noble family. Yet he threatens Bridewell and elaborates on its horrors until Bungler, feeling a mere boy does not deserve such severity, becomes pleader in his behalf: "Come, I'll be his surety for once."[29] Pursenet appears unwilling, but is persuaded at last; then in an aside to the boy, he says: "You put me to my set speech once a quarter."[30]

The stratagem of getting injured persons to plead for one who has victimized them appears in the *Merrie Conceited Jests* as Number 4, "How George Helped His Friend to a Supper." George there belabored his friend with ill words as Goldstone sometimes did Fulk,[31] and Pursenet, the Boy. George threw food from the table, at the friend, and at length threatened to send his dagger after it. But "the gentlemen stayed him," and George, "after a little fretting," sat quietly, unsuspected by those around him. Goldstone and Pursenet likewise offered to prove dangerous in their feigned anger. Both provoked pity in those who were the real sufferers from cheats, and both managed to appear sincere.

Inasmuch as three plays thus far have been shown to be indebted to the *Jests*, shall one believe all three were written in 1607 *after* the publication of the collection? The conclusive evidence seems to be the fact that the *Jests* were licensed December 14, 1605, yet none of the plays by Middleton drawing upon the work were licensed before 1607; all three of those which do show its influence were entered within a few months of each other, as has been shown above,[32] in 1607 and 1608. The published form of the *Jests* appeared in 1607. Though date of entry does not prove date of composition, neither does it disprove it, and I believe Middleton composed the three plays under discussion near together, while his source was yet fresh in his mind, and that the source, as regards the *Jests*, was the published form of that work.[33]

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[28] III, v, 97–100. [29] *Ibid.*, l. 131. [30] *Ibid.*, l. 151.

[31] Especially in II, iii, where Fulk attempted to join the game from which he eventually emerged with so much gain (see p. 759 above). [32] See p. 753 above.

[33] The argument here tends to strengthen that advanced previously (p. 755) on a different basis.

GREENE'S INFLUENCE ON THE ROGUE MATERIALS IN MIDDLETON'S DRAMAS

It would appear that Middleton, like other writers, desired to be thought original. In 1618, in the foreword to the Inner Temple Masque, he boasted:

> This nothing owes to any tale or story
> With which some writer pieces up a glory.

And indeed he long eluded the source-hunters; nor have they yet completed their work. Karl Christ[1] and R. C. Bald,[2] however, have made the most thorough investigation of his sources to date.

The present paper approaches the problem of influence somewhat differently from either of these scholars: through study of all available and possible non-dramatic sources of one of the most striking elements in his plays--the teeming use of rogues and their cozenages. In process of arriving at a conclusion, it has been necessary to examine: social satire, jest-book, translation, "anatomy," ballad, jig, criminal biography, "character," folk-tale, and rogue pamphlet. The significant fact which emerges out of this investigation is that Robert Greene had the greatest influence upon Middleton's choice of rogue matter.

There are sixteen plays, published as Middleton's or usually assigned to him, which employ rogue types or tricks. Of these, seven[3]--i.e., nearly half--show in varying degrees the

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[1] Quellenstudien zu den Dramen Thomas Middletons (Borna - Leipzig, 1905).

[2] See his edition of A Game at Chesse (Cambridge, 1929), Introduction and Appendix, and "The Sources of Middleton's City Comedies," JEGP, XXXIII (1934), 373-87.

[3] The earliest attribution of each drama to Middleton follows: Anything for a Quiet Life, 1662, title-page; The Mayor of Queenborough, 1661, title-page; Michaelmas Term, Kirkman and Archer; The Phoenix, Kirkman; The Roaring Girl, 1611, title-page; The Widow, Kirkman, and Gough's copy (on which a manuscript note says that Middleton alone was the author); Your Five Gallants, title-page (no date).
E.H.C. Oliphant in "Problems of Authorship in Elizabethan

influence of Greene in the treatment of such material. Named in the conjectured order of composition,[4] they are: The Mayor of Queenborough,[5] Michaelmas Term,[6] Your Five Gallants,[7] The Phoenix,[8] The Roaring Girl,[9] The Widow,[10] and Anything for a Quiet Life.[11] Yet these are not all equally important or valuable for the present study. Some deal only desultorily with the rogue; others show varied types of this figure. Hence the clearest and most undoubted borrowings from Greene will be grouped first, the probable and the possible being next indicated. But within each

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Dramatic Literature," Modern Philology, VIII (1910-11), 411-59, evaluates the evidence and concludes for Middleton's authorship of these plays on bases with which I am, for reasons too detailed to advance here, in substantial agreement.

[4]This order is based upon expressions of opinion by: C. R. Baskervill, "Some Parallels to 'Bartholomew Fair,'" Modern Philology, VI (1908-1909), 109-127; A. H. Bullen (ed.), The Works of Thomas Middleton (London, 1885), I, Introduction; E.K.Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), 4 v., passim; the Rev. Alexander Dyce, The Works of Thomas Middleton (London, 1840), I, Introduction; Mark Eccles, "Middleton's Birth and Education," Review of English Studies, VII (1931), 431-41; F. G. Fleay, quoted by Bullen, op. cit.; Fred Allison Howe, "Authorship of 'The Birth of Merlin,'" Modern Philology, IV (1906), 193-205; Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Drama 1558-1642 (Boston and New York, 1908), 2 v., passim; and Edward Arber (ed.), A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D. (London, 1875-77; Birmingham, 1894), Vols. II, III, V, passim.
These are respectively referred to below as: Ba, B, C, D, E, F, H, Sch, and S.R.

[5]One of the earliest (D); early but revised and extant as revised (B); 1596 or 1597 and revived 1622 (Sch); possibly after 1614, since Bartholomew Fair, from which it may have borrowed, was composed almost certainly c.1614 (Ba); after 1621 (H); between 1606-21 (E)--convincing in the evidence he offers; ante 1616? (C). The incidents of rogue type in the play do not offer much assistance in dating.

[6]Between 1606 and May 15, 1607 (S.R.); 1604 (Sch); 1606? (C).

[7]Between 1606 and March 22, 1607-1608 (S.R.); 1607 (C).

[8]Between 1606 and May 9, 1607 (S.R.); 1607 (Sch); 1603-1604 (C).

[9]A portion in 1606-1610 (B); 1610 (Sch); 1604 (F); c.1610 (C).

[10]1608-1609, 1608-1615 being limits from internal evidence (B); 1616-1625 (Sch); 1608-1609 (F); before 1616? (C); 1615-1616 (Ba).

[11]After 1595 (D); 1617? (B); 1619-1623 (Sch); 1623 (F).

group the conjectured chronological order will serve as guide for the discussion.

Middleton's rogues, like Greene's, are for the most part conny-catchers. A composite picture of this type--from which, of course, the individual may vary at points--reveals him as primarily unscrupulous and hard. He must be a man of mental keenness, able to perceive possibilities in situations. He may be of any origin, as far as class is concerned, but is versatile in acting convincingly any number of parts and is likely to make use of disguise to assist his deceits. Further, he has the ability to move cautiously and win his victim's confidence. He has a lively sense of the ironic, and, regarded from afar, is rather engaging in his lightheartedness. Since he is a professional, one is most likely to find him a member of a rogue fraternity, and, as such, employing a canting language unintelligible to the ordinary hearer. Altogether, he is a chameleon-like individual of extreme mental alertness.

From this group I exclude Quomodo,[12] Tangle,[13] and other legal officers,[14] as well as the hypocritical Puritans whom Middleton attacks.[15]

The Mayor of Queenborough supplies decided evidence of Greene's influence. In the drama Middleton's borrowing from Greene centers on a trick played upon Simon, the tanner and mayor, when the latter interferes with a play given before him as, in full regalia, he awaits the coming of the King of Kent (V, i). In this scene, the similarities to Greene, outside of one already noted by C. R. Baskervill,[16] lie in the reference to "familiar

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[12]The woolen-draper usurer of Michaelmas Term.

[13]The Phoenix.

[14]As Curtleax and Hanger, The Roaring Girl; Martino, The Widow; Falso, Latronello, Fucato, Furtivo, The Phoenix.

[15]Especially in The Puritan, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, and The Family of Love, but also in seven or eight other dramas.

[16]Simon, supplying the place of the gulled Third Player whom he has had arrested, is himself gulled; meal thrown in his face blinds him while the conny-catchers (the First and Second Players) rob him. Baskervill, MP, VI, 125, n. 1, stresses the use of the meal as the main likeness between this scene and Greene's "A merry tale how a Miller had his purse cut in New gate market," in The Second Part of Conny-catching.

cheats[17] like the money argument,[18] the pretended anger leading supposedly to a duel, the appeal to a bystander to become arbitrator in an argument, and thereby the attempt to make someone doff his cap.[19] These occur with frequency in Greene, as in The Second Part of Conny-catching where nips (purse-cutters) and foists (pickpockets) are exposed. For instance, there is the tale of a farmer walking in Paul's with his hand in his pocket and his purse in his hand. Foists jostled him unavailingly, tried to shake hands with him in vain, but finally tricked him by a means Middleton was to use in Your Five Gallants, by the swooning ruse. Or see the eighth tale in The Third Part of Conny-catching, where a gentleman tied up a gold chain and put it, for safe-keeping, in his sleeve. A cheater had advised him to do so. As he left Paul's, he was met by his "friend," who was entering. The latter dropped a key and, as he stooped to pick it up, was set upon with daggers by another conny-catcher. The gentleman rushed to his friend's defence and was robbed of his chain and purse. The conny-catchers immediately went away, ostensibly to fight a duel. A Disputation between a He and a She Conny-catcher tells, through Laurence, of a farmer who like Simon, warned against being cozened, boasted that his purse could not be stolen.[20] And he did successfully protect his money against several tricks of cheaters (as did the Third Player above); but he was eventually cozened by another trick.[21]

All the ruses that Middleton uses in The Mayor of Queenborough, in the designated portions, appear in Greene, and the tone in the play-within-the-play scene is identical with that

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[17]The cheater Second Player remarks (ll. 134-36),

> "your most familiar cheats take best,
> They show like natural things and least suspected.
> Give me a round shilling quickly."

[18]With this device the conny-catchers eventually cozen the countryman (ll. 153 ff.).

[19]The last three details occur between ll. 143 and 160.

[20]"A pleasant Tale of a Country Farmer, that tooke it in scorn to haue his purse cut or drawne from him, and how a Foyst serued him."

[21]For a similarity to the successful ruse, see below, p. 8 and n. 38, in connection with Michaelmas Term.

of the Conny-catching pamphlets.[22] The likenesses, however, between Greene and Middleton indicate no borrowing of a single tale or character; rather the playwright seems to have selected details which caught his fancy and which he recombined. Though some of these strategems are found earlier than Greene, they are not all contained in any one author until he wrote. It seems most probable that Middleton got them from him instead of from scattered earlier sources. Greene, be it remembered, had attracted him earlier through The Black Book's Messenger which he had laid under tribute for his own 1604 Black Book.[23]

The trick referred to above as occurring in Your Five Gallants is in scene vi. Pyamont walks with his hands in his pockets; Pursenet frets, attempts impudently to "salute 'em out," but vainly.

> Pur. You're most devoutly met in Paul's, sir.
> Py. So are you, but I scarce remember you, sir.[24]

A suggestion from Greene lies back of Pyamont's disclaimer of knowing Pursenet, R. C. Bald thinks, citing Greene's A Notable Discovery of Cozenage.[25] It may be further noted that certain of

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[22]There are two rogue incidents in the drama: this use of a band of robbers disguised as strolling players ("they have stolen two silver spoons. . . . . They only take the name of country comedians to abuse simple people with a printed play or two" [V, 1, 264-68]); and the measuring of land by means of a hide cut up into thongs which are then laid end to end to encompass a large territory. The latter incident came out of folklore originally; it is No. 2400, "The Ground is Measured with a Horse's Skin (ox-hide)," as given in the Folklore Fellows Communications, No. 74 (Vol. 25). But it probably reached Middleton through some printed work. Langbaine suggested Stow or one of the chroniclers as source. If The Puritan is Middleton's, as it seems to be, it indicates (IV, iii, 32-33, ed. C.F.T. Brooke, The Shakespeare Apocrypha [Oxford, 1918]) that he knew Stow's work by 1607 and may have been acquainted with it earlier. Schelling in The English Chronicle Play (New York, 1902), p. 185, suggests a Latin Play contemporary with Middleton as source: Fatum Vortigerni. Eccles accepts the latter.

[23]Bald (JEGP, XXXIII, 382) points out a probable parallel between this work of Greene and the picture of Trapdoor disguised as a wounded soldier in V, i, of The Roaring Girl. Dekker, however, may have been the borrower there.

[24]IV, vi, 17-18.

[25]Bald says: "Greene's account of the methods used by the cony-catchers to strike up acquaintance with their intended victims . . . . illustrates the means by which Pursenet tried to creep into the acquaintance of Pyamont" (loc. cit., p. 381).

the details in this play are distinctly reminiscent of those cited in connection with The Mayor of Queenborough: Pursenet's saluting a stranger who disclaims acquaintanceship; the useless efforts which he and the Boy make, for a time, to get at Pyamont's purse; and the expression, "It must be an everlasting device, I think, that procures both his hands out at once."[26] That device, the swooning trick, occurs between scene vi and scene viii, where one learns it has happened. Pursenet feigns swooning while Pyamont rushes to his assistance and the Boy picks Pyamont's pocket. This trick is described in full in Greene in The Second Part of Conny-catching, "A kinde conceipt of a Foist performed in Paules." The first half of Greene's account Middleton used in the play within The Mayor of Queenborough; the conclusion appears here. These are complementary pieces of evidence that Middleton knew Greene's rogue pamphlets.

The one piece of rogue material in The Phoenix, aside from the legal scoundrels whom I exclude from discussion, occurs at IV, iii, 64 ff.: a Gentleman covers the eyes of an officer arresting the Knight, and then says:

> Gent. Guess, guess! who am I? who am I?
> First Off Who the devil are you? let go: . . . . I have lost my prisoner.
> Gent. Prisoner? I've mistook; I cry you heartily mercy; I have done you infinite injury; a' my troth, I took you to be an honest man.

The Gentleman is rather forced in to permit this scene. As Bald mentions, Greene's The Third Part of Conny-catching relates this trick, "though there the application of it is slightly different." A woman is seeking advice of a lawyer in Paul's aisle, and her confederate approaches,[27] blindfolding the lawyer; meanwhile, she steals his purse. The cheater who has done the blindfolding then apologizes for the "mistake" he has made.[28] Middleton employs the details of the blindfolding and the apology.

The succeeding illustrations of the dramatist's knowledge of Greene's pamphlets are less striking individually but their cumulative effect is very telling indeed. For instance, in IV,

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[26] IV, vi, 38-39. Cf. The Mayor of Queenborough, V, i, 134: "your most familiar cheats take best."

[27] Bald, JEGP, XXXIII, 381.

[28] Cf. Pursenet's apologizing in Your Five Gallants, IV, vi.

vi, 51-53 of Your Five Gallants, Goldstone assumes cousinship with Bungler, to accomplish a deceit; in Greene's The Third Part of Conny-catching a "counterfeit coosen" occurs in "A pleasant tale howe an honest substantiall Citizen was made a Conny, and simply entertained a knaue that carried awaie hys goods very politickely." In Your Five Gallants as a whole, Goldstone performs the functions of a Lift, a type defined by Greene in The Second Part as pilfering anything within reach. Finally, the designation of Fulk as a "cross-biter" (II, iii, 335) probably was suggested by Greene's A Notable Discovery, where the second half is devoted to cross-biting.

Michaelmas Term, in II, i, makes use of yet another gulling trick: the means Shortyard uses to get Easy into a game. Greene describes it[29] under the general discussion of cozenage with cards. The gull is urged not to stop for lack of funds, for his "friend" will supply him for love of a mutual friend, or of the gull's father, or something of the kind. Blastfield (an alias of Shortyard) claims (without basis, as in Your Five Gallants)[30] the bond of friendship with "master Alsup," whom Easy knows "entirely well," and adds, "you must not want money as long as you are in town, sir. . . . . I am bound in my love to him to see you furnished."[31] He carries out the offer, thereby securing Easy's indebtedness to him. And, having lent sums to the young gentleman, he shames Easy into playing longer[32] and into inviting the other gamesters to a second meeting.[33]

The conny-catcher type as revealed in Greene is perfectly exemplified in Shortyard. He is unfeeling toward his victim; he is unscrupulous; he is mentally keen. It is he alone who gives a true estimate of Easy near the end of the play:

> Only good confidence did make him foolish,
> and not the lack of sense; that was not it:
> 'Tis worldly craft beats down a scholar's wit.[34]

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[29] In "A Notable Discovery," Works (ed. Grosart), pp. 15-39, and many tales scattered through the pamphlets.

[30] Cf. Bald, JEGP, XXXIII, 381.

[31] Michaelmas Term, II, i, 9-18.

[32] Ibid., ll. 38-41. [33] Ibid., ll. 189-90.

[34] III, iii, 16-18.

Under the name of Blastfield, apparently making good his boast that he has merely to ask a broker for money to receive it, Shortyard has convinced Easy.[35] Indeed Shortyard has excellent ability to play parts:[36] (1) he masquerades[37] as gentleman when he takes the name of "Blastfield" (II, i); (2) he is a Sergeant (III, iii) accompanied by a Yeoman[38] (Falselight, who likewise has shifted disguise to become a porter, II, iii, 347-53 and 392-402, and Idem, a "setter up," II, iii, 467-82, appearing as himself between times); and (3) both he and Falselight appear as two citizens (III, iv, 198 ff.), the further to cozen Easy.

I have said that the conny-catcher has ease of manner and patience; that he wins his prey's confidence and offers "helpful" advice. All this well describes Shortyard. And he gets exceeding relish out of all his knavery; he says, after having cozened Sim also,

> I have not scope enough within my breast
> To keep my joys contain'd; I am Quomodo's heir;
> The lands, assurances, and all are mine:
> I've tript his son's heels up above the ground
> His father left him: . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Here's all the bonds;
> All Easy's writings: let me see.[39]

Almost at that moment, learning that Easy has overheard him and

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[35]II, i, 178-79.

[36]Bald (loc. cit., p. 380) mentions the employment of disguise by Shortyard and Falselight as the most intricate in any of Middleton's city comedies, and feels, in this connection, that Greene exerted a general influence.

[37]For use of disguise by Greene, see in The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, ed. Grosart (1881-1883), "A Notable Discouery of Coosnage," p. 10; "The Second Part of Conny-catching," pp. 82-83; "The Third Part of Conny-catching," pp. 175-82, 187; "A Dispvtation," p. 215; et cetera.

[38]While in this disguise, walking in "A Street near St. Paul's," Falselight voices a fear: "But how if he should go to prison? we're in a mad state then, being not sergeants" (III, iii, 11-12). Was Middleton here slightly altering Greene's Disputation, where Laurence tells of a farmer who had boasted he could not be robbed? A foist bribed some sergeant to arrest the farmer in Paul's; but arrests were not supposed to occur there. The end of the tale in Greene hinges upon this fact. Middleton uses the same neighborhood for an arrest by would-be sergeants.

[39]IV, i, 1-5, 12-13.

knows his knavery, he turns to Easy with an impudence masterly in its assurance:

> I've cozened him [i.e., Quomodo] again merely for you,
> Merely for you, sir; 'twas my meaning then
> That you should . . . . have all agen.

But, as he sees that Easy cannot now be blinded, he relinquishes all the papers, saying,

> A' my troth, it's true, sir: look you then here, sir:
> (Giving the writings.)
> You shall not miss a little scroll, sir. Pray, sir,
> Let not the city know me for a knave.

Easy has appeared about to "smoke" him and, with characteristic discretion, Shortyard has recognized his only means of salvation. It is a perfectly rounded picture of a conny-catcher, even to the latter's joy at stealing from one of his own skill, Quomodo in this instance. Middleton has not followed Greene slavishly, but he has absorbed the whole spirit of the Conny-catching pamphlets.

Passages in A Manifest Detection . . . . of Dice-play and Awdeley's Fraternitye of Vacabondes are comparable to portions of Michaelmas Term, but neither work suggests itself as a source for the play. Awdeley is nearer Middleton, but differences between the authors may be noted in that Easy never wins[40] as does Awdeley's gull, nor is his deceiver an old man, seemingly from the country.

Anything for a Quiet Life (possibly composed 1617-1623) shows a return to the spirit of the 1606-1607 group of plays, in the Franklin junior-Cressingham trickery at the expense of Water-Camlet. Franklin junior claims for the ruse that "'tis a new one," but it can be shown that this boast is untrue.

In the drama, the trick consists in George Cressingham's acting the part of Franklin's tailor and passing expertly upon the quality of the cloth exhibited to them by Water-Camlet, the mercer. Selecting a piece for himself and his lady, but having insufficient money to pay for both, Franklin takes Ralph, Water-Camlet's apprentice, with him to carry the goods and receive payment for it (II, ii). Ralph (in II, iii) hands them the material, as they enter a barber's house, and waits vainly for them to return with payment. At length he realizes that they have escaped

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[40] See II, i. Easy parallels the gull of Greene's Barnard's Law (in A Notable Discovery of Cozenage): he is always the loser.

and he has been cozened.

Though The XII Mery Jests of the Wydow Edyth has a tale[41] like Middleton's in certain respects, the similarities are general rather than specific; the tone of the jest-book is cruder than that in Middleton's play; the offender there is a woman, whereas Middleton employs two men; the book, though a good quarry for the dramatist had he known it, is not even remotely paralleled in any other of his plays; and, finally, it is not demonstrable that he knew early rogue books.[42] Meanwhile, Greene conveniently supplied, in Middleton's own time and in books which, as has been shown, the playwright did know, similar details to those appearing in the comedy. The Second Part of Conny-catching, in giving "The discovery of Lifting Law," mentions the Lift, the Markar, and the Santar, and illustrates how they work by letting the Lift and Markar visit a mercer's shop. They look at goods, ask to see more,[43] and meanwhile decide which piece they intend to steal. While the mercer is reaching down other specimens to exhibit, the Lift gives the Markar the cloth he desires; the Markar, calling the Santar, who waits without, pretends to send the latter on a message but actually delivers to him the stolen goods. Anything for a Quiet Life has its Lift and Markar varied; no Santar enters in.

Another tale out of Greene may have given Middleton some ideas for this play. It occurs in The Third Part of Conny-catching: a serving-man, at his lady's direction, takes thirteen pounds' worth of cloth to a tailor, with instructions that it be made up thus and so. A token, a signet ring, is given the tailor to use in delivering the gown. Some conny-catchers, overhearing the bargain, determine to secure the cloth. One pretends that he is a gentleman; a second plays servant. The former goes to the same tailor, is measured for a suit, and then takes the tailor with him to a mercer's.[44] Meanwhile, the "servant," having stolen

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[41]The sixth.

[42]This is not to say that he did not read earlier books. But I have found no evidence of his direct knowledge of rogue materials appearing in print before his own lifetime.

[43]Cf. Anything for a Quiet Life, II, ii, 97: "A good piece, sir; but let's see more choice."

[44]George Cressingham plays the tailor to Franklin.

the signet ring while his "master" was being measured, presents it to the tailor's servants, asks for the cloth of thirteen pounds' value, secures it and escapes. Only parts of this tale fit the episode in Anything for a Quiet Life, but, as has been indicated, Middleton seldom follows a source literally;[45] he almost invariably takes suggestions, possibly from several parts of a given work, and recombines or reworks them. Hence Greene seems a wholly possible source in this instance.

There remain to be discussed (1) those incidents in plays which show evidence of several possible sources, Greene among them; and (2) those plays which were the result of collaboration. In treating the former group, it will be necessary to return to some dramas previously handled in another connection.

Dekker, in The Belman of London,[46] paraphrasing Greene in The Second Part of Conny-catching,[47] says: "some of these Bootehalers are called Termers, and they ply Westminster hall, Michaelmas terme is their harvest." Whether Middleton took his suggestion for a title, Michaelmas Term, out of Greene or Dekker, or his material from his personal observation[48] is uncertain, but there is abundant witness that the season which he chose for depiction gave excellent opportunity for cozenage. Circumstances in the drama may be likened to incidents in Greene or Dekker. Greene describes what happens in I, i, and II, i, as "Conny-catching Law."[49] There are three persons: a Setter, who makes the acquaintance of the victim, who has been pointed out to him by the Conny-catcher; the Verser, usually "a man of more worshippe" than the Setter, and "hee hath the countenance of a

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[45]W. S. Hoole, in "Thomas Middleton's Use of Imprese in 'Your Five Gallants,'" Studies in Philology, XXXI (April, 1934), 215-23, arrives at the same kind of conclusion: "nothing may be termed an exact duplication" (p. 221), "though Middleton was obviously familiar with emblems and imprese in books and in actual use" (p. 223).

[46]Pp. 157-58 (ed. Grosart).

[47]Pp. 32-33 (ed. Grosart)

[48]Eccles remarks upon the Middleton family's propensity to be constantly engaged in some legal controversy. RES, VII, 435.

[49]This and the Barnard's Law are both described in A Notable Discovery of Cozenage.

landed man',[50] and the Barnacle, who bets with and loses to the cony but eventually wins all from the victim. Middleton employs a cony-catcher in Quomodo (I, i, 108, 116 ff.), though Cockstone performs a somewhat like function (I, i, 42-60); the Setter and Verser appear in the person of Shortyard, who takes the name of Master Blastfield. There is no Barnacle in the play.[51]

Dekker, following Greene, likewise tells in The Belman of London[52] of the above tricks, but his victim is a "Hob-nayle-wearer". Easy cannot be so described, for he is of the gentry.[53]

Similarly, Your Five Gallants could, in certain of its parts, have drawn upon Greene or Dekker for suggestion. Greene in A Notable Discovery of Coosnage, Number 7, and The Second Part of Cony-catching had supplied Dekker's Belman[54] (all three works preceding Middleton's drama) with the Figging Law, i.e., picking of pockets. Middleton used the idea, never the term. His scenes are not identical with any in Greene or Dekker but he has a foist in the Boy aiding Pursenet, and a stall or shadow to distract the victim, in Pursenet himself.

III, ii employed High Law at Tailby's expense. Dekker had defined High Law at some length in The Belman,[55] amplifying Greene's brief definition of it in A Notable Discovery.[56] He said:

> The theefe that commits the Robbery, and is the chiefe clerk to Saint Nicholas, is called the High Lawier. He that setteth the watch is a Scrippet. He that standes Centinell and does watch is an Ike. He that is robd, is the Martin. When he yieldeth, it is called Stooping.

None of these expressions occurs in the play, but High Law itself

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[50] Loc. cit., p. 10 (ed. Grosart).

[51] The drama seems to have used the Barnard's Law for the final step, as was pointed out above, p. 9.

[52] P. 128 (ed. Grosart).

[53] See I, i, 110 and 137, referring to Easy as such.

[54] Dekker got the Barnard's Law from A Manifest Detection of Dice-play or Greene; see A. C. Westervelt, "Sixteenth Century Vagabond Literature in Thomas Dekker's 'Belman of London'" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1928).

[55] According to Westervelt, op. cit., who proves that Dekker used Greene's work freely.

[56] P. 151 (ed. Grosart).

[56] Greene gives little but a list of cant terms.

does.

In Michaelmas Term I incline to believe Greene rather than Dekker furnished Middleton with ideas, because the drama was entered on the Stationers' Register "15° Maij." 1607. The Belman (entered March 14, 1607-1608--a year later, therefore) would have had to be in manuscript long before that date, for Middleton to have seen it; and the likenesses it offers to Michaelmas Term are far less close than those Greene affords. The same general conclusion applies to Your Five Gallants: its likenesses to Dekker are also likenesses to Greene or to someone else (for instance, Rowlands), so that whether The Belman was used at all seems doubtful. Any writer upon rogue conditions may have supplied the idea of the band or fraternity which Goldstone organizes and the comment upon its usefulness (IV, viii, especially ll. 250-58); Greene has a passage explaining the values of such bodies to professional thieves, who thereby increase their stock-in-trade, and his tales give frequent illustration. Greene is, then, the more likely source: for type figures, for "laws," and for specific ruses.[57]

The likeness to Rowlands mentioned in the preceding paragraph occurs in connection with IV, vii of Your Five Gallants. There Goldstone steals a silver salt from Mistress Newcut, ostensibly to show Bungler how the lady looks when a "little waspish." This trick appeared in Awdeley, Rowlands, and Dekker.[58] F. W. Chandler thought Rowlands' thirteenth trick in Greenes Ghost was Middleton's source;[59] and doubtless he is correct, as otherwise the dramatist would have had to use "Five Jumps at Leap-frog" in the manuscript form of The Belman. Awdeley, I think, need not be considered; Middleton seems not to have known him except through plagiarisms.

According to the first title-page of each, two plays which were the results of Middleton's collaboration with other authors were The Roaring Girl and The Widow, probably composed

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[57] See above, pp. 5-7.

[58] In the Fraternitye of Vacabondes, Greenes Ghost haunting Coniecatchers, and The Belman, respectively.

[59] F. W. Chandler, The Literature of Roguery (Boston and New York, 1907), I, 87. Bald (JEGP, XXXIII, 378), likewise cites the parallel, apparently unaware of Chandler's earlier reference to it.

about 1610 and 1615-1616 respectively. The former was Middleton's and Dekker's work. Dyce has pointed out the parallels between The Belman and Lanthorne and Candlelight and the drama; and the indebtedness of Dekker's pamphlets to Greene's has been thoroughly established by Westervelt.[60] This indirect debt of the play to Greene is all that can be demonstrated, and need only be noted in passing. The rogue scenes--I, i; III, i, iii; and V, i--show no clues otherwise. V, i, were it not conceded to Dekker by critics' common agreement[61] because of its close parallelism to his pamphlet matter,[62] might be granted him on the score also that Middleton rarely used cant terms, even in the 1606-1607 dramas where he showed thorough acquaintanceship with Greene's Conny-catching pamphlets. Possibly the idea of using a woman rogue as central figure in the play had a literary source. There was already an English tradition on the subject, as exemplified in the XII Mery Jests of the Wydow Edyth and Greene's Disputation, where the She-Conny-catcher, though not central, was of equal importance with the He-Conny-catcher. Without question, Greene's and Dekker's pamphlets are the major sources for the drama, Greene mainly through Dekker. And, as was stated above, the principal rogue portions of The Roaring Girl appear to have been Dekker's composition rather than Middleton's.

Middleton apparently did not, then, borrow from Dekker, even when the two men were working together. And The Widow, a later drama, though it makes use, in III, i, of the High Law defined by Dekker (from suggestions in Greene),[63] is so much simpler in treatment and so free of cant terms that neither can it be said to be indebted to him.[64] In all cases, I incline to believe

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[60] Op. cit., passim.

[61] Bullen, loc. cit.; C. H. Herford, "Thomas Middleton," DNB, Vol. XIII; Miss Mary L. Hunt, Thomas Dekker, A Study (New York, 1911); A. C. Swinburne, Introduction to Thomas Middleton ("Mermaid Series"; New York, n.d.), Vol. I; Arthur Symons, "Middleton and Rowley," CHEL, Vol. VI.

[62] Bald (loc. cit., p. 382) finds in it a parallelism to Greene's The Black Bookes Messenger. This is possible as Dekker repeatedly plagiarized Greene; see Westervelt, op. cit., for convincing evidence.

[63] See above, p. 12.

[64] The other rogue scenes of the play have been shown by C. R. Baskervill (MP, VI, 126-27) to be closely parallel to portions of Sir Thomas More and Bartholomew Fair, and hence have no connection with Greene.

for reasons already stated, that Middleton did not use Dekker as source material. Possibly in The Widow, as in Your Five Gallants, the idea of the "law" came from Greene.

At this point the critic must admit as established, I believe, the fact of Middleton's intimate knowledge of Greene's work. In support of this statement, the following evidence may be adduced: (1) There occur in The Mayor of Queenborough's play-within-the-play a number of tricks in combination, some discoverable separately before Greene but all found together for the first time in his Conny-catching pamphlets. Middleton would seem to have known the jostle and the hand-shaking trick from "A kinde conceipt of a Foist performed in Paules' (The Second Part of Conny-catching); the pretended duel trick from the eighth tale from The Third Part; the boaster who said his pocket could not be picked and who made good his boast for a time, from "A pleasant Tale of a Country Farmer, that tooke it in scorn to haue his purse cut or drawne from him, and how a Foyst serued him" in A Disputation.

(2) A short passage in The Phoenix is devoted to the incident of the blindfolding trick and the "apology" which follows it. Greene's second tale in The Third Part affords illustration of the same devices.

(3) The combination of Conny-catching Law and the Barnard's Law in essence exists in Michaelmas Term. Dekker's Belman could not have supplied information on these same "laws" unless through the manuscript copy; and since Michaelmas Term reveals Shortyard as the typical conny-catcher, a figure definitely revealed by Greene but not by Dekker, and since Greene also gives the "laws" mentioned, it seems most probable that Greene was Middleton's source. The play's tone is, in addition, precisely that of Greene's pamphlets. It is not in the same spirit as Dekker's.

(4) In Your Five Gallants, there occur Figging Law, High Law, the failure of the "acquaintance" device, a "counterfeit coosen," the swoon ruse, a Lift, and the term "cross-biter." All these are to be met in Greene; not all are discoverable in Dekker. Further, the need for a manuscript reading of Dekker would have been imperative here also, if Middleton knew The Belman for this play. Greene, not Dekker, supplied the dramatist with the "former acquaintance" trick in The Mayor of Queenborough, which made use

also of the swoon from "A kinde conceipt of a Foist performed in Paules." Consequently, Greene seems the more logical to accept as provider of hints for Middleton's Your Five Gallants.

(5) Possibly the idea of a woman rogue as central figure came from Greene. Nan of A Disputation may have suggested the notion to Middleton or to Dekker for The Roaring Girl.

(6) Possibly High Law in The Widow was suggested by the Conny-catching pamphlets. Dekker's description is too elaborate for the play.

(7) Probably suggestions in Greene were the basis for the trick played on a mercer in Anything for a Quiet Life. Part of Lifting Law as defined in The Second Part and part of tales 5 and 10 in The Third Part instance, between them, thefts of cloth and the supposed proof of good faith on the part of the buyer, by his taking the mercer's boy with him to receive payment.

This summary indicates that Middleton used material from Greene for The Mayor of Queenborough, Michaelmas Term and Your Five Gallants. The implication is strong that he drew upon Greene also in The Phoenix and Anything for a Quiet Life. Certain it is that Middleton knew A Notable Discovery, the second and third parts of the Conny-catching pamphlets, and A Disputation. The borrowings from Greene are of every type: close parallels in specific frauds, general likeness to given incidents, union of hints from several tales, and strong similarity in the whole tone.

The XII Mery Jests of the Wydow Edyth offers some likenesses to Anything for a Quiet Life, but there is no positive means of demonstrating that Middleton knew it; the Franklin-Cressingham tricks could, as has been shown, have come from Greene alone. Certainly one can say, however, that Middleton's claim for the fraud practiced on Water-Camlet was untrue. The XII Mery Jests contributed to the tradition permitting a woman to be chief trickster, but again Greene could have been the intermediary for this idea as far as The Roaring Girl is concerned.

With all the evidence before him, the student must recognize that, despite Middleton's intimate knowledge of Greene, he was not dependent upon the latter. Mrs. Helene B. Bullock has most justly evaluated his attitude, I think, when she says that he was primarily one who watched the fashions in play-making.[65]

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[65] PMLA, N.S. XLII (1927), 766-76.

His manner of employment of rogue sources leads to the same conclusion. Rogue literature was on a tidal wave of popularity between 1590 and 1608, approximately, under the dominance of Greene and Dekker, and Middleton rode on the crest of the wave,[66] letting it carry him as far as it would, especially in the years 1604-1608. After that, in The Roaring Girl, he let Dekker manage the scenes which catered to a passing fashion, and from about 1610 on, he almost discontinued the rogue tricks he had once dwelt upon so prominently. His personal bent toward picaresque matter must be recognized; public demand alone could not have produced a consuming interest in roguery such as Your Five Gallants exemplifies.

But it would appear that Middleton was no originator of ideas on roguery until years after he had steeped himself in a literary tradition on the subject. He needed at first a suggestion to set him going. Greene furnished it in The Black Book's Messenger and extended it through the Conny-catching pamphlets. Middleton, however, rarely followed a source literally; he caught its full implication, intensified it, and frequently made it more complex. And, in his dealing with roguery learned through literature, he usually made his expression grosser than that of his original. The degeneration which he effected on this score was, however, offset to some extent by an intellectualizing of the rogue tricks and perpetrators in his sources. The conny-catchers, comic servant-rogues, and so on, of his plays were sketched with an ever-varying degree of subtlety and finesse, of seriousness or gaiety, showing a skill in depiction that is of no mean quality. One encounters the paradox of a certain brilliancy in the handling of low life, in the revelation of a Goldstone, Shortyard or Pursenet. But there is no escaping the fact that Middleton was no slavish plagiarist; for Greene, though a major influence upon him, never proved dictator to the dramatist.

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[66]The above study must remove need for the hesitancy expressed by Bald's words: "It may be taken as probable that he [Middleton] had read the popular coney-catching pamphlets" (JEGP, XXXIII, 377).